

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 22, 2005

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 5:20 p.m.

In Attendance:

J. DiPrete, J. Gaines, P. Guida, H. Gallo, F. Caprio, C. Callahan and (Ana Morgan who will be confirmed by the Senate on May 29, 2003).

Public Remarks

Terry Adelman representing Parents In Providence Schools (PIPS) spoke to the Board on the issue of state-aid to local school districts. She urged the Regents to work to increase state-aid to local districts - especially poor districts.

Three suggestions:

1. District state-aid should be based on projected numbers;
2. Allocate state-aid to districts in the same percentage as charter and state schools;
3. Help public schools become more flexible with staffing.

Sue Greenfield, also of PIPS spoke to the group about the problems in the Providence schools. She urged members to increase state aid to Providence so that the district won't cut arts based offerings.

Chairman's Remarks

Chairman DiPrete introduced the Rhode Island Milken Award Winners for 2002. They are: Smithfield Principal Susan Caputo and Stephanie Blackburn, a 4th grade teacher in Westerly. Mr. DiPrete presented each with the Milken Award obelisk.

Chairman DiPrete reported that he had represented the Board at the Rhode Island Association of Principals Honor's Night to honor the Principal of the Year; and

He had attended a Childrens' Crusade meeting. He told members that the Crusade has been doing a lot of work with middle school students so will ask Mary Harrison for assistance with the Regents middle school reform agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Because of the lack of a quorum, the approval of the minutes was postponed.

School Nurse/Teacher Presentation

Marilyn Mattera, a school nurse in Cranston and Alice Graddie, the President of the RI Certified School Nurse Teachers presented an overview of the work of the school nurse teachers and a brief history.

Tracy Dory, the Woonsocket school nurse-teacher spoke about the collaboration with the Department of Health to immunize children against hepatitis B. Sandy Delock, representing the National School Nurse/Teacher Association spoke to the

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group about national initiatives, including, Rhode Island's CDC grant, nutrition programs and safe food handling and the development of a health textbook.

Additionally, she reported that Rhode Island has been selected as a pilot program for emergency response training. She urged Board members to support activities that strengthen the communication between all the members of the school team - principals, teachers, school nurses and parents.

(Regent Callahan arrived at 5:40 p.m.)

Status of Rhode Island's Accountability System Approval

RIDE's Deputy Commissioner, Todd Flaherty introduced the agenda item and gave a brief historical overview of the submission timeline for Rhode Island's Plan. A press conference was held last week to announce Rhode Island as the 18th state to be approved.

RIDE's Director of Assessment, Mary Ann Snider, presented the critical pieces of the plan as follows:

- Core Components – Adequate Yearly Progress, Equity Gaps, Non-Academic Indicators, Improvement, Goals;
- The classification process (based on 21 pieces of data);
- Description of the classification of schools as high, moderate and low performing and how each can be designated as improving or sustaining;
- The Flexibility Within the System:
 - 3 year or 1 year review
 - Safe harbor provision
 - Error Bands
 - Cell Size of 45
 - Small Schools

Ms. Snider also gave the group information on new assessments that will be needed to support Rhode Island's accountability plan and a time line for implementation. The Department will be meeting with districts over the next week to present the information, in detail.

Approval of Minutes:

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approves the minutes of April 10, 2003 and April 24, 2003 as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

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Approval of Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs

RIDE staff member, Jackie Ascrizzi reviewed the timeline and process of the proposed regulations and explained that the regulations will have to be revised as new laws are passed that impact the current regulations. She highlighted the section on laboratory safety. She explained that because of lab accidents around the country there needed to be changes to the previous regulations. This new section supports current OSHA regulations on safety and also prohibits the use of and storage of certain chemicals in schools.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Proposed Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs for Public Hearing, as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Principles of Learning and Teaching Test for "Highly Qualified" Requirement

RIDE's Assistant Commissioner, David Abbott reviewed the agenda item. He explained that this approval item was being brought before the Board as a result of the Board's previous adoption of the content and pedagogy tests – the Elementary Education Content Knowledge Test and the Elementary Education Content Area Exercises – which would replace the PLT. An individual must successfully complete both tests, as well as become fully certified in order to be considered a “highly qualified” teacher, as required by the federal regulations under the No Child Left Behind Act. Because previously the Regents had required the PLT for certification, this recommendation would keep the PLT in place as a requirement for all those that have already taken it.

The group talked about the possibility of "sun setting" the PLT in the fall. Regent Callahan asked that all “concerned parties in the field be notified”.

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education accept a passing score on the PLT test as a substitute for successful completion of the Elementary Education Content Area Exercises, and, further that, an individual with a passing score on the PLT test need successfully

complete only the Elementary Education Content Knowledge Test to meet the "highly qualified" testing requirement.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Budget Update

Commissioner McWalters reported that there has been "no movement" thus far on the budget. He had met with Representative Paul Crowley to discuss budget issues. He also reported that there is revised state aid coming out of Washington that will give additional funds to Rhode Island.

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Governor's Education Transition Team Report

Chairman DiPrete and Regent Callahan reported that they had attended a Career and Technical education meeting and had some concerns about the report. Chairman DiPrete requested that the Department examine the report in detail and report back (on the issues that impact the Regents agenda) at a future Regents meeting.

Commissioner's Remarks

- RIDE Director of Human Resources, Paula Rossi reported on the Governor's Fiscal

Fitness Initiative. The group has just completed Phase I of the project which created a baseline of information on every agency.

Phase II will focus on work processes using performance measures to identify inefficiencies in the system.

- The Commissioner also reported on the School for the Deaf School and Board of Trustees. The Department is currently conducting a "friendly" intervention to support the Trustees and leadership transition. There will be a school visit in early June. Chairman DiPrete reported that the day-to-day operations seem to

be

proceeding in a routine manner, but the Trustees seem to need some assistance with their work. Staff members from the Department will be assisting.

Re: Gates Grant – A draft of a funding request has been sent to the Gates Foundation and the Department will be meeting with them to review it. The Commissioner is very optimistic that the request will be funded.

Regent Callahan asked that the Board recognize the passing of Representative Steven Anderson.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.